

A record of Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus* in southern Africa

Jörgen Sagvik

Un Étourneau roselin *Sturnus roseus* en Afrique australe. Un Étourneau roselin *Sturnus roseus* a été observé et photographié le 15 juillet 2005 dans le Parc National de Kgalagadi, au point d'eau Craig Lockhart, 18,8 km au sud du Mata Mata Rest Camp, Afrique du Sud. Ceci constitue la première donnée pour le pays et la deuxième pour la région afro-tropicale. Il est vraisemblable qu'il s'agisse d'un oiseau échappé de captivité, surtout vu la date inhabituelle de l'observation.

On 15 July 2005, while in South Africa on a birding trip, I visited Kgalagadi National Park, near the Namibian border in the Kalahari Desert, Northern Cape. Around 16.30 hrs, at the Craig Lockhart waterhole, 18.8 km south of Mata Mata Rest Camp, I noticed a bird that appeared familiar, but which I could not initially identify. It was accompanied by several adult and juvenile Wattled Starlings *Creatophora cinerea* as well as a Cape Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis nitens*, and was obviously also a starling. It recalled a Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus*, but my southern African field guide (Sinclair *et al.* 2002) did not even mention this species. I took some photo-

graphs through my telescope but, as the adapter was broken, I had to handhold the camera, and the pictures were not very good.

I observed the bird for *c.*30 minutes from a distance of *c.*20 m and compiled a written description. The bird possessed a black head, throat and upper breast, black wings, a brownish-pink back and uppertail-coverts, pink belly and flanks, black thighs and a black tail. The undertail-coverts were black with a scaly appearance. The bill was pinkish red with a black base, the legs pinkish red. The bird was similar in size to a juvenile Wattled Starling, but appeared less slender.



Figures 1–2. Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus*, Kgalagadi National Park, South Africa, 15 July 2005 (Jörgen Sagvik)
Étourneau roselin *Stunus roseus*, Parc National de Kgalagadi, Afrique du Sud, 15 juillet 2005 (Jörgen Sagvik)

Eventually, as I moved somewhat closer to obtain better photographs, a car flushed all of the birds. The starling, which by now I felt quite certain must be a Rose-coloured Starling, was not seen again. I subsequently consulted several rangers at the camps, but none could help with the identification. Back in Sweden, I contacted Callan Cohen in Cape Town, who placed the photographs on the Birding Africa homepage and the bird was soon confirmed to be a Rose-coloured Starling. The brownish tone to the back suggests that it was probably a second calendar-year bird yet to attain full adult plumage (Cramp & Perrins 1994).

This is the first record of Rose-coloured Starling for southern Africa and only the second south of the Sahara, following one in Ethiopia c.4 months previously (Fry *et al.* 2000, Schollaert 2006), though the possibility that the bird was an escape cannot be eliminated, especially considering the unusual date of the record. More recently a third record, again from Ethiopia, concerned two birds in breeding plumage photographed amidst a flock of Wattled Starlings in Abiatta-Shalla Lakes National Park, in late April 2007 (R. Tizard in *Bull. ABC* 14: 222).

Acknowledgements

I thank Callan Cohen for placing the photographs on Birding Africa's homepage. Thanks also to David Fisher, Jeremy Lindsell, Mike Meidlinger, Killian Mullarney, Dick Newell, Georges Oliosio, Philip Whittington and Chris Wormwell for their valuable comments, and to Ron Demey for helping me draft this note.

References

- Cramp, S. & Perrins, C. M. (eds.) 1994. *The Birds of the Western Palearctic*. Vol. 8. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fry, C. H., Keith, S. & Urban, E. K. (eds.) 2000. *The Birds of Africa*. Vol. 6. London, UK: Academic Press.
- Schollaert, V. 2006. First record of Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus* for Ethiopia and sub-Saharan Africa. *Bull. ABC* 13: 75.
- Sinclair, I., Hockey, P. & Tarboton, W. 2002. *Sasol Birds of Southern Africa*. Cape Town: Struik.
- Department of Zoology, Animal Ecology, Medicinaregatan 18, 405 30 Göteborg, Sweden. E-mail: jorgen.sagvik@zool.gu.se

Received 20 October 2005; revision accepted 12 April 2008.

First record of Wahlberg's Honeybird *Prodotiscus regulus* for The Gambia

Kevin Roy

Première mention de l'Indicateur de Wahlberg *Prodotiscus regulus* pour la Gambie. Un Indicateur de Wahlberg *Prodotiscus regulus* a été observé à Kulari Swamp (13°23'N 14°06'W), Upper River Division, Gambie, le 30 septembre 2006. Ceci constitue la première donnée pour le pays, les mentions précédentes les plus proches provenant du Mont Nimba à la frontière entre la Guinée et le Liberia.

On 30 September 2006, at 12.30 hrs, whilst birding around Kulari Swamp (13°23'N 14°06'W), near my home in the Upper River Division of The Gambia, I observed a plain, dull-plumaged, sparrow-sized bird with an undulating flight and conspicuous white outer rectrices emerge from a dense savanna woodland and land, c.1 m above ground, in a *Mimosa pigra*, an invasive

prickly shrub, at the swamp edge. For 3–4 minutes it flitted between low perches in isolated specimens of those shrubs at a distance of 10–30 m, occasionally flicking and flaring its tail. It picked an insect from the ground and finally disappeared in the adjacent woodland, not to be seen again.

Initially I thought it was a Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor*, a rare bird in the Upper River